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AFRL delivers body armor to deployed troops

by Sue Murphy, AFRL Public Affairs

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Ohio — An Air Force Research Laboratory materials research processing engineer presented several sets of high tech body armor to Maj. Michael Florio, commander of the 88th Security Forces Squadron, whose unit deployed in mid-July.

1st Lt. Todd Turner from AFRL's Materials and Manufacturing Directorate collaborated with Excera Materials Group Inc., of Columbus, to develop a metal-ceramic hybrid material for use in the armor. The new composite material creates a higher-performance, lower cost, lighter-weight small arms protection for warfighters.

The body armor is being tested by Army, Marine and Air Force units. Improvements and modifications are continually being made based upon their comments. Funding is provided through the Technology Transition Initiative Program from the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Air Force Protection Battlelab, Lackland AFB, Texas, as well as internal funding from AFRL.

"The idea is to deliver the best product to the men and women who are taking bullets – they're the ones who truly matter," said Lieutenant Turner. "Knowing that it could save the life of a fellow Airman makes me feel especially proud."

Major Florio said that it's important to develop and field the best equipment to not only protect the troops, but also to give them an advantage against their enemies.

"The product AFRL has produced is light-weight, dependable and has the capability of taking hits," Major Florio said. "These characteristics give our forces the ability to move and shoot, as well as peace of mind that they are protected." @